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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, IRAQ, CLIMATE, MIDEAST,
NORTH KOREA;BERLIN

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- [1](#)1. Lead Stories

ZDF-TVQs primetime newscast Heute opened with a story on the EPAQs decision to declare greenhouse gases as a dangerous pollutant that it now has authority to regulate. ARD-TVQs primetime newscast Tagesschau opened with the fine the FDP has to pay for taking illegal donations. Several newspapers led with stories on the EPA decision. Headlines included: QMore latitude for Obama in the dispute over emission limitsQ (Frankfurter Allgemeine), QU.S. President allowed to limit emissions independentlyQ (Die Welt), and QObama leads the way,Q (Tageszeitung). Other papers led with stories on the Federal Audit OfficeQs criticism of the German governmentQs spending policy, and the fine the FDP has to pay. Many media carried prominent reports of the terror attacks in Baghdad that killed more than 100 people. Editorials focused on climate policy and the fine for the FDP.

- [1](#)2. Climate Change: EPA on CO2

Frankfurter Allgemeine editorialized: QPresident Obama had a brilliant idea: he told his Environmental Protection Agency to declare carbon dioxide as poisonous pollutant. He can now go down an administrative path to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, for which the Senate has refused to approve legislation thus far. All of Copenhagen is now jubilant about this coup. The reaction in the U.S. will be the opposite. If Obama cannot persuade his people that they are digging their own graves with the wasteful approach to fossil energy resources, no tricks will help.

Under the headline QNews of symbolic value,Q Sueddeutsche Zeitung

remarked in an editorial: QAmerica has implemented on an administrative level what is common knowledge in the rest of the world: carbon dioxide is a climate killer. As a result, the Obama administration could pass regulation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the United States. It is, of course, not a coincidence that the EPA decision, which was in the pipeline for half a year, was announced during the opening of the climate protection conference in Copenhagen. This is supposed to signal to the world that the new U.S. government does not just talk but wants to take action and makes concrete moves on climate protection. The message was understood: environmental groups enthusiastically welcomed the news from Washington. However, it is just of symbolic value at the moment. The limits must still be determined, and this can take time.

Under the headline QRay of hope,Q regional Nordwest Zeitung opined: QThe danger that the huge conference will end with an agreement that represents the least common denominator is big--because national egotisms can block the path for international actions. However, this time around, there is a ray of hope. All expectations are now focused on the new U.S. President. The rest of the world is expecting him to announce concrete measures on how the largest environmental polluter might quickly and effectively reduce carbon dioxide. Barack Obama will attend the final discussions to Copenhagen. This might seem to be a confidence-building measure, but Obama will be measured by the things he says, promises and implements.

Die Welt expressed more skepticism about the current climate change debate, noting in an editorial: QWithout carbon dioxide in the air,

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there would be no plants, human being or animals. We might have increased its level in the air too much, but our health could deal with 30 times of that increase. LetQs not forget, breath by breath, we breathe out carbon dioxide. LetQs be calm and simply hold our breath, particularly when we are told that everything is getting worseQbefore the gents and ladies of the EPA get the idea that they can also regulate our emissions.

13. Terror attacks in Iraq

Under the headline QBloody Tuesday,Q Frankfurter Allgemeine editorialized: QWe can only speculate about the masterminds of the recent bloody terror attacks in Bagdad. Whoever carried them out is pursuing two goals: the attacks are supposed to demonstrate that the Iraqi security forces are not capable of protecting their own people--not even the members of the government in their residences--since the American troops have withdrawn to their bases outside of cities. In addition, the terrorists want to scare the hell out of Iraqis to prevent the election campaign on March 6 We can expect an increase in the number of attacks the closer we move to the election date. It is also a huge problem that there are several people within the security forces who make it easy for the terrorists. And also the inefficiency is adding fuel.

14. Bosworth in North Korea

Frankfurter Allgemeine commented: "American special envoy Bosworth, who is talking to the North Korean leadership, cannot be envied. What is he supposed to talk about? According to Bosworth, he does not bring along any additional incentives for Pyongyang. It was recently said that only the fact of his visit would be an incentive big enough for North Korea to resume the six-party talks on its nuclear program. If Bosworth wants to achieve this, he must promise something else. This is the way North Korea has always achieved something. However, even if only the economic desperation of the regime in Pyongyang is big enough to achieve an almost unconditional return to the six party talks, nothing would be gained. Officially, the goal is a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. Given that North Korea will not renounce its only means to exert pressure, the failure of Bosworth and the six-party talks is inevitable.

15. Afghanistan: Gates Visit

Many media noted that Secretary Gates QunexpectedlyQ visited

Afghanistan, where he emphasized the international community's determination to help the Afghan people. ZDF-TV's late-night newscasts Heute-Journal The newscast added: QAnd if this was not surprising enough, he also says something that has not been said before: QWe are in this thing to win.Q So far, the U.S. government has only spoken of success.

16. Mideast: EU Ministerial on Jerusalem

Sueddeutsche headlined QEuropeans take the edge off a Mideast declaration,Q and noted: QThe EU has rejected the attempt by Swedish Foreign Minister Bildt to define now the exact borders of the territory of a future Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.Q Under the headline QJerusalem belongs not to one side only,Q Frankfurter Rundschau editorialized: QA peace solution that excludes Jerusalem will not be worth the name. Therefore it is good that the EU foreign minister reminds everybody that Jerusalem does not belong to one side only. If a peaceful future is supposed to have a chance, Israel and a future Palestine would have to share Jerusalem as a capital.

17. Iranian Clashes

Frankfurter Allgemeine editorialized: QNothing makes them silent.

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Thousands of Iranians took to the streets on Monday calling Qdeath to the dictator,Q despite all the threats, intimidations, and massive repression However, is the Iranian society, the most modern in the broader Middle East, really ready for a secular and democratic political system? Or do we with our Western view on the small urban elite ignore that fact that the rural people are backward-minded, religious and conservative? All velvet revolutions from Leipzig to Tbilisi were made in cities. In Iran, more than two thirds of the people live in cities, which is more than in Japan, Egypt and Afghanistan... Greater Tehran alone counts more than 12 million inhabitants. The young urban people are protesting on the streets--the largest group in Iranian society.

MURPHY